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Maggie's Return.

See page 103.

HOPE ON;

OR,

“THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT.”

BY F. M. S.

Work for some good, be it ever so slowly;
Cherish some flower, be it ever so lowly;
Labor, true labor, is noble and holy;
Let labor follow thy prayers to thy God.

FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

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CONTENTS.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I. JACK'S FIRST THEFT..... | 7 |
| II. "HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY;" AND JACK FINDS IT SO..... | 23 |
| III. JACK GETS WORK..... | 37 |
| IV. HOMELESS AND HOUSELESS..... | 49 |
| V. JACK'S TROUBLES, AND HOW THEY WERE CURED..... | 65 |
| VI. "LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION..... | 77 |
| VII. THE CLOUD AND ITS SILVER LINING..... | 95 |
| VIII. THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT..... | 107 |
| THE BEGGARS..... | 113 |
| THE CUP OF COLD WATER..... | 135 |

Illustrations.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| MAGGIE'S RETURN..... | 2 |
| JACK AND STEPHEN MOORE..... | 28 |
| JACK AND MAGGIE TURNED OUT..... | 60 |
| JACK AND THE OLD BLIND WOMEN..... | 90 |

HOPE ON.



I.

Jack's First Theft.

“BOOT-LACES—very strong, and only one penny!”

Such were the words which greeted a young lady who was following her mother from a store into their carriage, laden with parcels which were destined to delight the hearts of many little brothers and sisters at home. She turned for an instant to look at the speaker. It was only a little miserable-looking boy, whose pale sunken cheek and feeble voice told a tale of hunger and want of which *she* knew nothing.

Again he spoke. "Kind lady, only one penny; I'm so cold."

"I've got nothing for you, little boy."

How could she say it, when the penny which she had received in change was still in her hand? but *she* did not know what it was to be hungry.

"How dirty he is, mamma: and look at his feet!" she whispered, as she wrapped her warm cloak around her, and fastened the costly fur closer about her neck.

Yes; she may well look at his bleeding feet. All day long he has walked through those weary streets; he has told that same pitiful story again and again, but no one has listened; he has cried with the cold, but no one has cared; he has gazed longingly

into the baker's shop, and craved for a morsel of the bread which lay there in such plenty, but no one believed that he was starving, and now he was refused again.

He stood wistfully gazing after the carriage as it rolled away, and the big tears gathered once more in his eyes as he whispered to himself, "Nothing for Maggie! O, if I were one of those rich beautiful ladies, I'd give money to all those who were cold and hungry!" and little Jack brushed his hand over his face, and tried to keep back the sobs which rose in his throat. He sat down on the lowest of a flight of steps which led up to some public office, and began to think what he could do. "She must have something to eat; she must, and she shall. O, if I

were only a man!" and then he counted over the boot-laces which he held in his hands to see that they were all right.

How cold it was! The piercing wind whistled down the street, making everybody shiver, and driving clouds of rain into the faces of the foot-passengers who went past the little boy; but his ragged clothes could not keep out any of the cold and wet, though he wrapped his tattered jacket more closely round him, and blew upon his numbed hands to bring some feeling into them. At last a sudden thought struck him, and springing up, he followed a cart which was going along the street. It stopped in a quiet square, and Jack saw a baker's boy jump down with a basket of bread, which he put on the pave-

ment, while he descended the area steps and went into the kitchen.

Quick as thought little Jack sprung forward, and snatching a loaf of bread from the basket, hid it as well as he could under his jacket, and ran away as fast as his legs could carry him. A voice seemed to say close to him, "Thou shalt not steal," and he gave one frightened glance behind him, but no one was there, and so he only quickened his steps. His pale cheeks flushed crimson with his speed, and the thought of what he had done; but he kept on, saying to himself,

"Never mind, Maggie will have something to eat now; the boy wont miss that one loaf, and I'm sure no one is so hungry as we are."

At last he reached the alley where he lived, and descended the steep

steps that led to the dark damp room, which he inhabited with Maggie and their father when he was at home, but at that time he was away, and the children did not want him back again.

“Jacky, is that you?” cried a voice from the far end of the room. “How long you’ve been!”

“Yes; it’s me, Maggie. I couldn’t come home sooner.”

A small cold hand was passed over his face, and then a little trembling voice said, “How cold you are, Jacky, and so wet! Have you got anything to-day?”

“Only a loaf,” replied Jack quickly.

“O! I *am* glad of that; I’m so hungry,” and Maggie’s head dropped down on her brother’s shoulder, and Jack was not sorry that he had stolen

the bread which was to satisfy the cravings of the only one in the whole world who cared about him. He broke a large piece off the loaf, and gave it to his little sister; but it was rather a guilty gladness which filled his heart when he heard her say, "What nice bread! O Jack, how good it is!" When she had finished her crust, Maggie wanted to know all that he had done that day; but Jack stopped her questions by saying, "What have *you* been doing?"

"Nothing," answered the child wearily.

"Nothing at all?"

"No," and her voice sunk very low. "Jacky, you know my eyes have been getting worse and worse, and to-day I can't see at all. I crept up the steps when you were gone, and found

my way to the room where Mrs. Short lives, and I asked her to give me some water to bathe my eyes; but when she looked at me she cried out, 'Why, Maggie, you're going blind!' so I came down again then, and, O Jacky, it's very, very hard!"

"I don't believe you're going to be blind," said Jack, vehemently.

"Yes, Jacky, I think I am; you know mother said she never should be surprised if I lost my eyesight, and I haven't been able to see properly for a long time, and—" but tears stopped the little girl, and Jacky could not keep from crying himself.

"What seems so hard," sobbed Maggie, "is that I sha'n't ever be able to work again now, and father will scold me and beat me."

"He sha'n't," muttered Jack, and

his arm was thrown around her, as if to assure her that no harm could happen to her while he was near.

“And Jack,” continued the little girl in a broken voice, “wont it be dreadful if I’m never to see the blue sky again? or the ladies in their pretty dresses? or the flowers in Mrs. Watson’s store-window? or the orange-stalls in the streets? or the peep-shows? and, O Jacky! I forgot the worst thing: never to see your face again! What shall I do? O, what shall I do?” and Maggie’s head sunk lower and lower, and her sobs came quicker than before.

There was a long silence in the darkening room. The daylight, while it lasted, had struggled in through a window high above the children’s heads; but now it was

almost entirely gone, and the scanty furniture could be seen but dimly. A table, two chairs, and two small beds of straw, took up the greatest part of the room. A broken bird-cage hung near the window, but the goldfinch, which had been little Maggie's chief treasure, had died long ago ; for it could not bear the change from a bright and cheerful room to the dark damp cellar, which its little owner was obliged to go to after her mother's death ; so the bird had tried to sing, but failed : it pined for a gleam of sunshine, but the sunshine never came, and at last it drooped and died, and Maggie had one thing less to love in the world which had grown so dark and dreary to her of late.

Jack began to think that Maggie

had gone to sleep, and he feared to remove his arm lest he should waken her. Her sobs had ceased, and her slow regular breathing was the only sound which he heard ; but at last she spoke.

“Jacky, I’ve been very naughty ; I’ve been fretting and grumbling about my eyes, and quite forgetting who made them bad.”

“Does God make all our troubles come, Maggie ? Because mother said he would love us ; but it don’t look much like it.”

“Yes, Jacky dear. He sends them ; I know he does. Mother said he didn’t love us the less because he sent us hard things to bear. He loved mother, and he will love us, because she asked him to.”

"But, Maggie, why don't he give us a nice house, and warm clothes, and good things to eat?"

"I don't know, Jack; but he knows quite well. Perhaps," she said doubtfully, "it is that we may be more glad when he takes us up to heaven."

"I think he gives us harder things than he gives Dick Perkins, and Tom North, and Pat Doyle."

"O Jack! those are all bad boys. I know they are, because you have told me so. I think they are worse off than we, because they don't know that God loves them, and they steal, and so they can't be happy."

"I think they are, though," replied Jack.

"I'm sure they can't be, Jack; just think how unhappy we should

have been while we were eating that good bread if we had stolen it."

Jack started, and seizing Maggie's arm tightly, he cried, "Maggie, Maggie, you didn't see me! Nobody saw me! Has anybody told you?"

"Told me what, Jacky?" asked the little girl in low frightened tones.

"Told you that I stole it?" whispered Jack. "I didn't mean to do it; but, Maggie, while I was sitting on the steps and thinking how hungry you'd be, and that I had nothing for you, I remembered what Dick Perkins did one day; he took a lot of gingerbread off an old woman's stall when she wasn't looking, and I saw Tom North take some apples out of a boy's basket another day, so I thought if I ran after the baker's cart I might get a loaf, and so I did;

but I'm sorry now that I stole it, though I'm not sorry that we've had some supper."

"O Jacky!" said Maggie, mournfully, "how grieved mother must have been if she was looking at you."

Jack sighed; he knew that he did a great many things which would grieve his mother if she saw him.

"And God saw you, Jacky, and it must have displeased him. O don't ever steal again; please don't," and she laid her little cheek close to his, as she said the words in her most beseeching tones.

"I'll try not; but, Maggie, what shall we do? we shall starve."

"No, no; God will take care of us. Do you remember mother's favorite words, '*Hope on?*'" Jack remained silent a minute or two, and then said

with a firmness that was almost manly, "Hope on? yes I will, Maggie, and I'll work on too; and if ever I'm a rich man, I'll take care that no little children that I see shall ever be as cold and hungry as you and I are; I'd like to give them all warm frocks and hot bread and milk as we used to have, and good beds to sleep in. O, I wish I was rich!"

"And I'd like them all to know about God in heaven, and the kind Saviour who died for them, and will wash away their sins, and keep them from being naughty," whispered little Maggie. "Now, Jacky, let us say our prayer and go to bed."

And so the two weary little ones knelt down, and Maggie repeated the simple form of prayer that their mother had taught them, and in which

they asked their Father in heaven to take care of them, and to put His good Spirit into their hearts, that they might be made fit to live with Him above, and to take away all their sins for their Saviour's sake. They both thought of the stolen loaf when they said this, but their hearts were lighter when they got up, and their sleep was calm and peaceful, for the God of the orphans was watching over them, and guarding them through the long hours of that winter's night.

II.

“Honesty is the Best Policy,”

AND JACK FINDS IT SO.

“HOPE ON,” said little Jack to himself as he shivered down the street the next morning with his boot-laces in his hand. His heart was not so sad as it had been the night before, for a good sound sleep had refreshed him; and besides this the sun was shining, which always made him feel happier. “Hope on!” He liked to say the words, though there did not seem much to hope about. “It’s no use my carrying these things,” he thought, as he looked contemptuously down at the boot-laces in his hand. “I want to be at work, as a boy should, and not begging. I wish I could run

errands, but nobody would take me, because they don't know whether I'm fit to be trusted ; perhaps I'm not ;" and he sighed as he remembered the stolen loaf of the night before.

And so the poor little ragged fellow wandered up and down the streets, during the bright hours of the morning, until his feet were quite weary, and he stopped to rest himself by leaning against some iron railings. While doing so his attention was attracted toward a tall young man with a wooden leg, who was sweeping the crossing opposite to him. He had just laid down his broom and was talking to a little girl, who had brought him his dinner in a bowl. Jack wished that some one would bring him some dinner, but there was no one to do this so he contented himself with

watching the lame youth eating his. But either the wistful face or the ragged clothes of the little beggar boy brought a feeling of pity into the sweeper's heart, and he did not finish his dinner, but limping over to Jack, put the bowl into his hands, saying,

“Here, I say ; you look as if you wouldn't be the worse for this.”

Jack took it eagerly, thanked him, and then began hastily to devour the nice, hot food. Stephen Moore, for that was the name of the lame boy, eyed the hungry little fellow from head to foot, and then gazed earnestly into the child's face, as if there was something there that was not common. His gray eyes had a clear truthfulness in them that Stephen liked, and there was a determined look about his mouth which seemed to say that it

would not be his own fault if he starved.

“What brings you lagging about here?” asked Stephen rather roughly.

“I’ve got nothing else to do,” said little Jack, looking up steadily into the sweeper’s face, and pausing as he was about to convey the last spoonful of the hot potatoes to his mouth.

“Don’t tell me that,” said Stephen, “I believe there’s work for every one in this world if they’ll only set to and do it. Have you got two hands and two feet?”

“Yes,” answered Jack, smiling.

“Well, then, you’re better off than me; I’ve only got two hands and *one* foot, and yet I’d rather lose the other than loll against a railing, and whine out about boot-laces to folks that’s got other things to think of.”





Jack and Stephen Moore.

Jack reddened, but at last he said, "If you'll tell me something better I'll do it."

Stephen thought a minute, and then replied, "Get a broom and sweep."

"No !" said Jack ; "I can't buy a broom, and besides, there is no crossing for me."

"Well, run errands."

"Who'll take me?" said the little boy, looking wistfully at his ragged clothes, which were all fastened together in front with a small wooden skewer.

"Well, you don't look very respectable, certainly," said Stephen bluntly ; "but can't your father get something for you to do?"

"He has gone away and left Maggie and me."

"And have you got no mother?"

asked the sweeper in a softened voice.

"No," replied the boy, as he brushed his sleeve quickly across his face.

"Mother died a year ago."

"And who's Maggie?"

"My sister, and she's going blind."

"Well, look here, I want to go home for a bit and help my mother, so you take my broom and sweep here till I come back, will you?" and hardly waiting for a reply, Stephen limped away.

Jack liked the work, and two or three people were attracted by the importunate looks of the little boy, and put a cent into his hand as they stepped along the path which he had made so clean across the muddy road.

Stephen was away for nearly an hour, and in that time Jack had earned

four cents. Of course this money was Stephen's, as Jack had only taken his place and used his broom; but as Stephen was coming round the corner a wicked thought flew into little Jack's mind, and he slipped two cents into his pocket, holding out the other to Stephen, and saying, "Here's two cents for you."

"Is that all you've got?" asked the sweeper.

"Yes," replied Jack, stooping down to remove a small stone which had stuck to one of his bare feet, and by this means preventing Stephen from seeing his face.

"Well, it's my broom, and my crossing, but you've got the money, so we'll go halves," and he tossed a cent over to him.

A fierce battle went on for a few

minutes in little Jack's mind; the cents were safe and snug in his pocket, and as he dropped the last one down beside them they made a pleasant chink, and he felt quite rich, but not quite happy. Somehow his thoughts went back to the words of the prayer which his mother had taught him, and which he had prayed with Maggie only the night before. He thought of the loaf; he thought of Maggie's grief, and then for a moment he lifted his eyes to the bright blue sky above him, and remembered that God's eye was upon him to watch what he would do. He fancied, too, that his mother was looking at him, and then, half to himself and half aloud, he said the words which he had so often repeated when kneeling at her knee, "Lead us not into temptation, but

deliver us from evil." He shoved his hand far down into his pocket until he found the two cents; but O, it felt so pleasant to have them! he thought he could not give them up. For one moment he settled that he would keep them; but the next, right gained the victory over wrong, and hurriedly handing them to Stephen, he said,

"I got these too; I was going to have kept them."

Stephen looked at him curiously, and then said quietly, "Why didn't you?"

"Because I should ha' been a bad boy, then, and a thief," answered Jack bravely.

"I shouldn't have known that, young un."

Jack looked down uneasily, and

then said in a low voice, "But God would."

Stephen's face was lighted up with a broad smile of satisfaction as, laying his hand on Jack's shoulder, he said heartily, "Stick to that, my boy; I'm glad you're of that kind, because I know you're safe to get on."

"What do you mean?" asked Jack, looking up amazed.

"Why, just this: I don't believe that there has ever been a man, woman, or child, who has always remembered the God above them, and trusted to him, and tried to please him, that has been left to starve."

"But I wanted to have kept those coppers," said Jack.

"Yes, I know you did, and therefore I say, *Well done*, young un.

Now, look here, a brother of mine has died lately," and Stephen's voice trembled as he spoke; "he got the scarlet fever, and it carried him off. Now, he was a boy as carried newspapers about, and he got seventy-five cents a week for it. I've been thinking, mayhap, they want another boy to fill up his place; you're quick on your legs; I think you'd do."

Jack's eyes brightened as he said, "Yes, I'd like that."

"Well, make yourself as clean as you can by to-morrow morning, and meet me here, and I'll get my sister Katie to show you the way to the news office."

"Thank you kindly," said Jack, and he was moving off, when Stephen called him back, and putting the cents which he had earned, besides

the cents in his pocket, into his hand, he said kindly:

“Here, get something for Maggie with this; and mind, young un, go on as you’ve begun. ‘Honesty’s the best policy,’ and God will remember those who remember him, whoever they be.”

III.

Jack gets Work.

TRUE to his promise, little Jack was waiting for Stephen at the corner long before the sweeper had arrived there. He was rather an odd figure, though he felt that he looked more respectable than usual. His face was clean; what a thin, pale face it was! for the roses that had once been on his cheeks had faded away since his mother's death. His head was covered with an old brown cap that had lost its rim, which he wore very far back to prevent its tumbling over his face, as it was much too large for him. A coat which had belonged to his father covered his body, and Maggie had contrived to cut off the tails

of it, so that it might not trip him up. It was all in holes, but Jack was accustomed to that, and the rags were fastened in front, as usual, with a small wooden skewer. His ragged pants were as much too short as his coat was too long, and he had neither shoes nor stockings. But notwithstanding all this, there was something bright and pleasant in his face; perhaps it was the reflection of the courage which little Maggie put into his drooping heart by so constantly reminding him of their mother's favorite words, "Hope on!"

And little Jack was full of hope this morning; he felt that if he could only get work he would bear anything. A smile passed over Stephen's face at the funny appearance which the beggar boy presented; but he

did not say anything about it, and after bidding him good morning, told him that the little girl who was with him was his sister Kate, and that she would show him the way to the news office.

So Jack shuffled off after Kate, who was a girl of about Maggie's height, and had a kind and good-natured face.

Before they had got very far they came to a baker's shop, and Jack looked in so longingly that Katie asked him if he was hungry.

"*Hungry* ? I should think so !"

"Haven't you had any breakfast?"

"No ; I don't ever have any."

Katie's eyes opened wide with astonishment. "Don't have no breakfast? and why do you wear that funny coat?"

"I haven't got any other."

"Why don't you put on a blouse?"

"I've got none."

Katie went on for a few steps, and then stopped suddenly. "They won't take you in that coat; come back along with me to mother's and I'll get her to lend you one of Billy's old blouses. I can wash it if you don't make it very dirty."

"Come along, then," said Jack; "I know I could get on quicker if I hadn't these rags dangling about my feet."

So Katie led the way until they came to a very narrow street, into which she turned, and stopped at the door of a large house which was let in sets of lodgings. "We must go up stairs," she said, running on before Jack, and he followed up four or five

flights of steps, until they entered the topmost landing,

"These are ours," whispered Katie, and then, opening the door, she led Jack into a nice cheerful room.

The windows were not large, but they were so clean that they admitted plenty of light. The ceiling was low, but the room was always kept thoroughly aired. The furniture was scanty, but very tidy, and the floor was well scrubbed.

A small fire, but a clear and bright one, was burning on the hearth, and its ruddy light flashed upon the row of well-washed dishes and tin porringers which stood on the shelf opposite the fireplace.

An elderly woman, with gray hair, and a very pale and care-worn face, was engaged at needle-work, while

she gave directions to a girl of eight or nine, who was washing the plates which the family had used at breakfast.

Two little boys of five and six were playing in one corner of the room, and their rosy faces and merry voices added cheerfulness to the whole scene.

"Mother," said Katie, "here's the poor little lad Stephen told us about last night. I'm going to take him to the news office; but look at him, mother, he can't go in that coat."

Her mother lifted her eyes from her work, and surveyed the little fellow from head to foot, and as she did so a smile passed over her face; but it changed into a look of compassion as she marked the sunken cheeks and thin blue lips which told such

a sad story of cold, and want, and hunger.

“Poor child,” said Mrs. Moore; “cut him a good slice off our loaf, Katie. Come here, my boy, and warm by the fire.”

Jack wished that Maggie were there to warm herself also; but it was no good wishing, so he began to eat his bread with great relish.

Meanwhile, Katie was whispering something to her mother which made the poor woman's lips quiver for a moment, and her eyes fill with tears, as, laying down her work, she went over to a box that stood near the window. Out of it she took a coarse brown blouse and a ragged comforter, and bringing them over to Jack, she said,

“Here, put on these. I wouldn't

let any but an honest lad wear them, but Stephen tells me you are that."

Jack soon drew off his cumbersome coat and put on the blouse, and then Katie brought him an old belt to fasten round it, and tied the comforter about his neck.

"There now, you'll do much better," she said brightly; "come, we've no time to lose."

Jack stopped for a moment to thank Mrs. Moore for her kindness in lending him the clothes, and to promise that he would take good care of them, and then followed his little guide down stairs.

"They were Billy's," explained Katie, as they ran together along the street, "that's my little brother as died last month, and so mother's very precious of them."

And now they had arrived at the busy news office, and Katie telling him to go up the steps, wished him good success and left him.

A number of boys were coming out with parcels of papers under their arms, all looking very busy and important as they ran off to their different destinations; some toward the stage offices, others to the stores, and others to sell their news in the streets.

Jack stood irresolutely at the bottom of the steps watching those who went in and out, and fearing that, as so many people seemed engaged there, there could be no work for him to do. But while he was lingering, he was startled by feeling some one pulling his hair, and looking round he saw Dick Perkins.

“What are you here for?” asked

Dick, who, like the rest, had got a large bundle of papers under his arm.

Jack would rather not have seen him; but when he found that Dick was a newsboy, he thought that he might be able to tell him whom he ought to ask for work, so he replied, "I want some work; what shall I do?"

Dick was good-natured, though he was a bad boy, so he said, "Come up with me, and I'll bring you to the manager."

Jack followed him, and Dick led the way to a large room off the printing-office, where the papers were being folded by some, and arranged in piles by other boys. At the far end of the room was a little desk, with a railing before it, where the manager

sat, and it was to him that Dick brought his companion.

The manager looked over his spectacles at the two boys before him.

"Who sent *you* here?" he asked, after a keen survey of little Jack. "Be off with those papers, Dick Perkins."

"Stephen Moore, sir," replied Jack; "he said perhaps you'd want some one in the place of his brother that's dead."

"But I don't know anything about you."

Jack told his story respectfully, and the manager kept his keen eyes fixed upon him the whole time. He said, "Well, perhaps you've told me the truth, and perhaps not; but we want a boy, so I'll try you for the sake of Billy Moore, for he was as good and

as honest a lad as I ever met with."

Jack was then instructed in his work, and sent off with another boy, who taught him to attract the notice of the public by shouting out the name of the dayly paper, and running after the carriages which he met with.

IV.

“Homeless and Houseless.”

JACK soon began to find that his work had its difficulties. The money he earned was barely sufficient to buy food for himself and Maggie; and as their father had not returned, they began to wonder what they should do about paying the rent of their cellar.

Poor little Maggie's eyes grew worse and worse, until she entirely lost the use of them; but she never murmured or complained about this; her only sorrow was that she had no means of earning money, and that all her days were spent in wearisome idleness.

Her chief pleasure was when even-

ing came and brought Jack home ; it was so nice to sit down beside him and hear all that he had seen during the day, and then to be allowed to share and to comfort him in all his daily troubles ; for he told her how Dick Perkins had wanted him to tell some whining story of beggary to those who bought from him, and how he had refused ; how Tom North had offered to teach him to pilfer from the shops if he liked. “ But O Maggie ! ” said the little boy earnestly, one night when these temptations had been fiercer than usual, “ I don’t think if I did those kind of things I could ask God to take care of me every morning before I go out.”

“ No,” said Maggie, squeezing his hand tightly. “ Jacky, I don’t think

you'll ever do any of those wicked things while you ask God to help you."

"But, Maggie, when do you think father will come back?"

"I don't know," answered his sister; "what shall we do if he doesn't come at all, Jack?"

"O, he couldn't be so cruel," cried Jack; "he knows that we can't pay our rent."

"Perhaps he means us to go to the almshouse."

"We wont go there, Maggie, if I can help it."

"But, Jacky, I think somehow that I ought to go there, because I'm of no use."

"Yes, you are," said Jack, "you don't know all the use you are to me; lots of times when I've wanted to do

something bad I've thought of you, and then I've not done it. I think I should get to do just like those other chaps if I hadn't got you to talk to when I come in."

And so Maggie was comforted.

One night, soon after this conversation, when Jack had just returned from work, and had groped his way down the staircase, he was attracted by the sound of a loud voice addressing his little sister, and he thought he heard her sobbing. He entered the room quickly, and saw a man whom he had often seen with his father standing opposite to little Maggie, whose face was perfectly white with fear, while her small hands were tightly clasped, and the big tears were chasing each other quickly down her cheeks. At the

sound of her brother's footstep she sprung to meet him, and stood clinging closely to him, though trembling from head to foot.

"What's the matter?" asked Jack, eagerly. "How is it that you're here, Tim Long?"

"You'd better ask Maggie," said the man with a grin, "she don't give me a very warm welcome."

"What is it, Maggie? has he been hurting you?" whispered Jack.

"O no, Jack," said the man, who overheard him, "I wouldn't hurt her; I only came to bring you both a message from your father."

"Well?" said Jack, looking up at him anxiously.

"It's just this, your father's got work somewhere in another state, and he says you must shift for yourselves;

he thinks he's had enough of you. Ha, ha!" and Timothy Long, the rat-catcher, gave a laugh, but it was rather a bitter and an uneasy one.

Jack put his arm round Maggie, and stood for a moment in perfect silence, as if trying to realize the meaning of Tim's words. At last he gasped out, "What does he mean us to do? where are we to live?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, young un, I don't think he much cares whether you live or not, and *I* think the almshouse is the best place for them that has got no other home."

"Never mind, Maggie, don't cry so," said Jack; "we wont go there."

"Beggars mustn't be choosers," said Timothy, roughly.

"We owe for three weeks' rent already," said poor little Maggie.

“Well, leave these bits of things behind you when you go, and they’ll do to be cut up for firewood: that’ll stand instead of rent.”

“But what *shall* we do, Tim?” asked Jack.

“Well, now, I should think a handy quick chap like you could pick up a tolerable living in the streets; you needn’t be particular how, so long as you keep out of the hands of the police.”

Jack shook his head. “Thank you, Tim, but I wont have anything to say to that kind of work.”

“As I said afore, beggars mustn’t be choosers,” replied Tim angrily, “but if you wont take good advice I’ll be off about my business; only if you ever change your mind, I’ll bring you to a friend of mine who can put

you up to a trick or two. Good-night to you," and with an oath as he stumbled up the dark stairs, Timothy Long took his departure.

"Is he gone?" asked little Maggie, fearfully.

"Yes," said Jack, with a sigh of relief.

"O I'm so glad! He's a bad man, Jacky, to want you to steal."

Jack did not answer, for his heart was too full, and he did not want Maggie to know that he was crying.

At last she said softly, "Jacky, we've got no father now."

"No, we've not," said little Jack.

"Then shall we ask God to take care of us?"

"Yes."

So the little blind girl knelt down beside her brother, and in a trem-

bling voice began the Lord's Prayer, and as they said the words, "Our Father which art in heaven," a feeling of peace and security crept into the children's hearts, and they felt that while they trusted to Him, they might still *hope on*. Hardly had they risen from their knees when the woman who kept the house burst into the room in a great fury. "So you're going to cheat me of my money, are you?" she cried; "not another night shall you sleep under this roof! Out with you as fast as you can."

"To-night?" asked little Jack in amazement.

"Yes, to-night, because there's other folks a-coming in; honest folks, as will pay for what they use."

"We didn't mean to cheat you, Mrs. Bond; we thought father would

come back and pay up the rent; but you can take the tables and chairs."

"I should think I would!" And the landlady began to abuse their father so shockingly, that Maggie whispered hurriedly, "O Jacky, come away as quick as you can."

So Jack began to collect the little things which they might take, their mother's Bible, two little plates and mugs which she had given them, and the remains of a loaf which they had had the day before, together with a few ragged clothes which formed Maggie's wardrobe. He tied them all up in a bundle, put a tattered shawl and bonnet which had belonged to their mother on little Maggie, and then led her up the stairs and out into the cold dreary street.





Jack and Maggie turned out.

The landlady's heart smote her as she saw the two children go shivering along the damp pavement, and she thought for a moment of the only child she had ever had—a little girl of about Maggie's age—who was lying in the grave-yard; but then she slammed the door, saying to herself, "I dare say they'll be just like their father, and I can't afford to lose my money."

The rain was falling fast, and the night was very dark. The two children wandered on for some time until Maggie grew too tired to walk any more, and then they sat down on a door step. Jack drew the shawl closer round his little sister's trembling frame, and did all he could to keep her warm. She tried hard not to cry, but with all her efforts she

could not restrain the sobs which kept bursting from her.

“O Maggie,” whispered Jack, “don’t cry so ; it makes it all so hard to bear. Couldn’t you put your head down on my shoulder and go asleep ?”

Maggie did put her head down, but she could not go to sleep. “Are you sure you’ll keep me safe, Jacky ?”

“Yes, indeed I will.”

“You wont go away from me ?”

“No, I never will do that.”

Then neither of them spoke, but Jack felt that Maggie was getting colder and colder, and he feared that she would soon be insensible, so he quietly drew off his own coat, and wrapped it round her, and then remained holding her as close as he could, without minding the cold and wet which were numbing and chilling

himself, and from which his only protection was a very ragged shirt.

At last he heard footsteps coming near them, and fearing that it might be a policeman, who would put them in the lock-up, he shrunk back as far as he could out of sight; but it was a familiar voice which said to him: "Why Jack, my lad, haven't you been home yet? You'll get no good by lagging about the streets at night."

"O Stephen, is it you? I'm *so* glad," and little Jack fairly sobbed for joy.

"What's the matter?" asked the sweeper, as he bent over the two children.

"We're turned out of doors, and father's never coming back, and I'm afraid Maggie will die of the cold."

“You poor little things,” said Stephen kindly, and with a strange softness in his voice, “come along with me. Why, this child is half frozen,” he continued, as he lifted Maggie in his arms, and then bidding Jack follow him, limped away in the direction of his own home.

V.

Jack's Troubles, and how they were
Cured.

"MOTHER, I wonder what makes Stephen so late?" said little Katie Moore as she put away the small brush with which she had been sweeping the hearth. "His nice supper will be spoiled, and it isn't *every* night that he gets fried bacon."

"I suppose the night-class wasn't over as early as usual," replied her mother, who was working at the table. "Put some more coal on the fire, Katie dear, the lad will be wet when he comes in."

"Aint it a good thing we've got some fire, mother?"

"Yes, Katie; many a poor soul

would be glad of the comforts we have this night."

"I wonder, mother, what makes our room so much nicer than Mrs. Deane's or Mrs. Hall's? it's ever so much smaller, and we've not got so much money as they have."

"Well, Katie, do you know I think it is soap and water and contented hearts."

Katie laughed, for she knew that however saving and economical her mother was about other things, she never spared soap and water.

"But I wish Stephen would come, mother, for my eyes are beginning to close up, and I want to see him eat his supper."

"You had better put a knife and fork for him, and get a piece of bread, and then everything will be ready."

"O, here he is, mother!" cried the little girl as she heard steps coming up the staircase, "here he is at last."

"Yes, here I am," said Stephen, entering the room with the half-frozen child in his arms. "Look, mother, here's a sorry sight for a night like this. I'm glad we've got a fire to warm them by."

"Why if that isn't Jack Turner!" cried the good woman in astonishment, as she saw the little boy who shivered in after Stephen.

"Yes, mother, and this be his little blind sister, and to think of them both being turned into the streets on such a night as this," and Stephen's voice shook with anger as he spoke.

Mrs. Moore's eyes filled with tears, but she was more given to doing

than to talking, so she drew little Maggie into her arms, and began to chafe her hands and feet.

“Bed will be the best place for her, Katie, she shall sleep with you ; bring me some of your clothes.”

And before long little Maggie was lying fast asleep in Katie's bed between the clean sheets, which were quite a luxury to the poor child, who had only been accustomed to a bed of straw.

Jack shared Stephen's supper and bed ; but all night long the poor little fellow tossed about, unable to sleep, and racked with burning pain in all his limbs. The constant exposure to the cold and rain, coming on a frame already weakened from want of food, proved too much for his boyish strength, and when the

morning dawned he was in a high fever.

Stephen called his mother, and they consulted as to what was the right thing for them to do.

"We cannot turn these helpless little ones out to die in the streets," said the kind-hearted Stephen.

"And yet, my son, is it right to burden ourselves by maintaining them when we are so poor?" said his mother, doubtfully.

Stephen thought for a few moments and then said, "Mother, I think the Almighty God has sent these children to us to be looked after for his sake."

His mother smiled, "I know what you're thinking of, Stephen, that verse in the blessed book which says: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one

of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' They shall bide along with us, Stephen, lad, and we'll leave the rest to God."

Stephen's eyes told how glad he was, and Mrs. Moore then went to Jack.

And it was with all a mother's care and tenderness that she nursed the little orphan boy. No thought, no pains, no trouble was spared that could do him good. But of all this kindness little Jack was quite unconscious. He raved of the cold dark streets, of his papers, the lateness of the hour, of Tim Long's bitter words, of their dead mother, and cruel father.

For some days Mrs. Moore despaired of his life; but at last a change came; his wild words ceased, and he

fell into a quiet slumber. When he woke, his first word was, "Maggie." The little girl was sitting on the corner of the bed, and as soon as she heard it she crept up to his side, and passing her little hand over his face she said, "Here I am, Jacky dear."

"Where am I?"

"In Stephen's bed."

"I thought I was in the street crying my papers. I forget about it."

"No, Jacky, you are safe in Stephen's home."

"Do you think he'll turn me out into the streets? O, beg him not to, they are so cold!"

"No, I know he wont."

"Is mother here? I fancied I felt her hand on my head."

But he did not hear her reply, for he had turned on his other side and

was asleep again. From this day the fever left him ; he was as weak as a little baby, but lay perfectly quiet and without complaining, for he felt that this was the only thing he could do in return for all the kindness which was shown to him.

But kind Mrs. Moore, who watched him, saw that there was something troubling him, for often when she sat beside him she could see his eyes fill with tears which he tried in vain to conceal.

One day she said to him kindly, "Jacky, my lad, do you want anything? what's the matter?" and she gently laid her hand upon his forehead.

Jacky did not reply, and Mrs. Moore went on: "You've got no mother, Jack, and I've lost a son of

your age, so I want you to let me be like a mother to you; wont you tell me what you are fretting after?"

"It's a great many things, Mrs. Moore."

"Then tell me all about them, there's a good boy."

"Well, I'm afraid they'll have got another boy to take my place by the time I'm well."

"Never mind if they have, we'll try and find some other work for you."

"And then I don't like that Maggie and I should eat your food and give you trouble, and not get any money for ourselves."

"I'll trust you, Jack; you're an honest boy, and I know you will repay it all to us some day; but there's something else besides that, lad."

Jack buried his face in his hands,

and answered with a sob, "Mrs. Moore, I'm not an honest boy, and it's that which makes me feel bad;" and then with many tears he told her the story of the stolen loaf. "And O!" he said, when he had finished, "I've been thinking about it so much while I've been a lying here, and I've prayed to be forgiven, but still I feel bad about it, because I don't know who the boy was, so I can't give him another loaf."

Good Mrs. Moore wiped her eyes, for little Jack's simple story had brought the tears into them, and she replied, "I don't think you'll steal again, Jack."

"No, I don't think I shall. I don't like it, because it makes me feel so ashamed."

"Yes, and it displeases God, who

says, 'Thou shalt not steal;' and now I'll tell you what you'd better do. There is a box at the door of the church we go to on Sundays, and people put money into it to buy bread for poor old folks as can't get it for themselves; so, the first pence you earn you can put in there, and that will be doing the best you can toward giving back the loaf; and you must ask the good God to keep you from ever doing so wicked a thing again, will you? And whenever you want to, just remember how our Saviour resisted the devil when he tried to tempt him to do wrong, and ask him to give you his strength to keep you right."

"Thank you, Mrs. Moore; that's the way mother used to talk to

me." And from this time little Jack's heart grew lighter, and every day he grew stronger and stronger.

VI.

“Lead us not into Temptation.”

At last the time came when little Jack was able to go out again, and very eagerly he waited for admission to the news office; but he found all his fears realized, for another boy had been employed in his place, and there was no work for him to do.

It was with a very downcast face that he went to Stephen and told him the news, and the sweeper saw what a hard trial it was to the poor boy, so he said kindly, “Never mind, Jack, you’ll get some other work, and you know you can stay with us till you do. Hope on, lad.”

As Jack walked away from him

he met Tim Long. The rat-catcher stopped him, and laying his hand on his arm, said, "Well, young un, you don't look much fatter than when I last saw you; are you coming to me for a little help soon? Look here now, a handy chap like you would make his fortune in a few years, and then you could turn into an honest man if you liked."

Jack shrunk back from him with horror. "Please don't talk that way, Tim. I sha'n't be an honest man if I'm not an honest boy, and, God helping me, I mean to be both, let me be as poor as I may."

"The time will come when you'll change your mind, youngster, or I'm much mistaken," said Tim scornfully. "Honesty doesn't pay in this 'ere world of ours."

"O, it does; indeed it does," said little Jack earnestly.

"Where be you living now?" asked Tim roughly.

"At Mrs. Moore's," answered Jack.

"And how much are you earning?"

"Nothing at present, because I've been ill, and they've got another boy instead of me."

"And do you call that honesty, to live at your ease, and eat the bread of folks nearly as poor as your self?" asked Tim with a sneer.

Jack colored; he felt the truth of Tim's words too painfully to reply to them.

"Jack Turner, now listen to me," continued the rat-catcher. "Your father and I were chums: not that I think he's done right by you, for my

notion is that if a man has got children he's bound to provide for them, and it isn't for his sake that I'm going to say what I've got to say."

Jack looked up rather eagerly, for Tim's voice and manner were changed. They were almost kind.

"No, young'un! it's for the sake of one who's gone. Your mother, Jack, was the only one who ever spoke a kind word to me of late years. She knew me from a boy, and though I know she didn't like me, she was always kind to me; so now, youngster, if you like to come and take up your quarters with me, I'll teach you my work, and give you food until you're able to earn it."

Jack hesitated; there was a great deal of kindness in Tim's proposal,

and after all to be a rat-catcher was not dishonest. It would be a very good thing to have something to do, and he would be able to earn enough to pay Mrs. Moore for keeping Maggie. But then, as he looked up into Tim's face, he felt as if it would be wrong; and there came into his mind a verse which his mother had taught him long ago, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." He knew that Tim was a bad man, and how could he expect God's blessing, or ask him "to deliver him from evil," if he put himself into the way of temptation? And yet, after all, could he not keep away from all the evil? No. He knew that if he was closely associated with Tim Long he must be mixed up in a great deal that was wrong, for Jack knew that

he swore, that he was given to drinking, and that he was not thoroughly honest.

The rat-catcher watched his face narrowly, and said at last, "I see how it is, young un, you like your present idle life too well to give it up."

This roused all Jack's pride, and rather than that Tim should think this he would consent to anything; so looking up at last, he said slowly, "Thank you, Tim; I'm sure you've made me a kind offer, and I think I'll—" He paused, and for a moment his thoughts went back to his mother's dying bed, and to the prayer which she had taught him, "Lead us not into temptation." He clasped his hands together, and repeated the words in a low whisper,

and then said aloud, "I cannot come, Tim, indeed I can't."

"Well, you're giving a nice proof of the honesty you boast of," said Tim with an oath.

Jack's hands were more tightly clasped than before as he answered, "O, I shall soon get work! I *will* get it."

"O, come now, my lad. I've got work already cut out for you, and nice work too; who'll say that being a rat-catcher is dishonest?"

"It isn't that; but please, Tim, don't ask me any more. I can't, I mustn't go with you."

Tim's face changed, an angry cloud came over it, and as he turned off he said savagely, "You'll live to repent this; but stick to your *honest* life if you will; for my part I'd die

sooner than I'd live on the charity of others. I've made a fool of myself by offering to show kindness to such as you."

Jack sprung after him, and seizing his coat-sleeve, said hurriedly, "Tim, don't think that I'm not thankful to you. I sha'n't forget your kindness; no, never."

But Tim shook him off, and walked quickly away.

Very sorrowfully Jack gazed after his retreating figure, and he half repented of his hasty decision; but something within him seemed to assure him that he had done right, and said to his tired and almost despairing heart, Hope on.

Tim had left him at the corner of a street, and on his right hand there stood a large building, which was one

of the best known mercantile houses in the city. The gates which led into the court-yard belonging to it were open, and Jack saw a great many boys and men going about inside.

“I’ll go there and ask if they have any work they can give me to do;” and no sooner was this resolution formed than he acted upon it, and entered the yard.

A man who was hammering at a large chest looked up as Jack passed him, and asked him what he wanted.

“Can I see Mr. B.?” inquired Jack rather timidly.

“Ha! ha!” laughed the man, “that’s a good joke. And do you think Mr. B., has nothing to do but to attend to such gentry as you? You’d better clear off, my lad.”

But Jack was not to be so easily discouraged; it was work that he wanted, and work he intended to have, if there was any to be obtained.

"I want to see him particularly," he said with a most determined manner.

"And I tell you, you can't; he's not here at all now."

"I'll wait till he comes," said Jack.

"He's out of town," said the man, looking much amused at Jack's pertinacity.

"When will he be back?"

"I don't know; perhaps to-day, perhaps to-morrow, perhaps not till next week."

"Is there nobody who could give me a bit of work that I might earn enough to buy some bread?"

"There's the head clerk crossing the yard, you can ask him."

Jack went over to him, and touching his cap respectfully, repeated his entreaty for work.

"No, no, my boy," replied the clerk, "I know nothing about you. I can't give you work; you had better go."

Disappointed and heart-sick, little Jack did as he was desired; but he had heard that Mr. B., the merchant, was a very kind-hearted man, so he determined to wait outside the office, and make his request again to him when he returned.

A number of boys were playing at marbles on the pavement, and Jack joined them for want of something better to do. For some time the game went on very merrily, but at

last the boys began to quarrel over it, and several of them left off playing.

“Look there, Jack,” cried one of them, called Pat Doyle; “do look at that old woman trying to cross the street! She’s afraid some of the carts will run over her; what fun it is!”

Jack could not help being amused at the old woman’s frightened attempts at crossing. She would go on for a few steps, and then come back as fast as she could; again she would wait a few moments, then try once more, and just get half way across when the driver of some vehicle would shout to her, and she would run back more frightened than ever.

Pat Doyle laughed louder at each of her attempts, and when there was





Jack and the Old Blind Woman.

an unusual number of carriages coming, he called out, "Now, goody, run; now's your time!"

The old woman turned at the sound of his voice; and Jack eagerly seized Pat's arm, saying, "Pat, Pat, you mustn't laugh, she's blind."

"All the better fun," shouted Pat; but Jack did not heed him, for he had sprung to the old woman's side and taken her hand, saying, "Wait an instant till these carts have passed, and then I will lead you across."

"Thank you, my good lad. I'm a poor blind woman, and my boy as used to guide me is gone away."

Jack put her hand on his shoulder, and led her over quite safely, and then said, "Can I take you anywhere now?"

"No, thank you, my boy. I know where I am, and I'm only going a few steps further. God bless you; though I can't see you, I know you're a good lad," and she shook his hand warmly, and went on her way.

A gentleman who was coming down the street had watched the whole scene, and now stopped and spoke to Jack.

"You did quite right, my lad."

"She was blind, sir," said Jack in a pitying voice.

"And what makes you so kind to blind people?" asked the gentleman.

"Why, sir, you see the person I love best in all the world is blind."

"Who is that?"

"My sister Maggie. She has gone quite blind lately."

The gentleman remained thinking for a moment, and then said, "Where are you living?"

"With Stephen Moore, sir."

"Stephen Moore? Do you mean the lame sweeper?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'm glad you're in such good company. I know Stephen very well; but have you got no parents?"

Jack told his story in a few words to the gentleman, who listened attentively, and said when it was ended, "So you want to be employed in Mr. B.'s house?"

"Yes, sir. I was waiting about in the hope of seeing him. I can't bear that we should live on charity, sir."

"Quite right, my boy. I know Mr. B., and I have no doubt I can get you some work. Now, I should

like you to come up to my house to-morrow and bring Maggie with you. My name is Dr. Harcourt, and I live in Clarence-street. Come in good time, my lad."

Jack's face beamed with pleasure, and it was with a quick step and a very hopeful heart that he returned home; he longed to tell Maggie all that had happened on this eventful day.

VII.

The Cloud and its Silber Lining.

MAGGIE was not sitting with Mrs. Moore, and Jack went into the room where she slept to look for her. He found her there, kneeling by the bedside, with her face covered. He went over to her, and putting his arm round her neck asked her what was the matter.

"Nothing, Jacky," she replied; "I was only praying to be made patient; this is so hard, so very hard."

"The blindness, do you mean?"

"Yes; O Jacky, I wish I was with mother!"

"That's not kind, Maggie. I couldn't live without you; and now I've got work, I think."

"But I'm of no use, and never shall be. And, Jacky, though they are so kind here, I know I'm a trouble."

"Well, soon I'll be able to pay them for their trouble; but I must tell you all about it," and he gave her an account of the whole day. When he had done, Maggie said, "O, Jacky, here have I been crying and vexing over my one trouble, and now to think of all you've been bearing to-day! I think you've been very brave."

"Maggie," said little Jack in low and reverent tones, "I think God has made me strong to-day."

"I know he has, and he will make me strong too; and, after all, Jacky, when I go to heaven I shall be able to see, so I'll learn to wait for that."

"And I know there are some

kinds of work which blind people can do," said Jack.

"Yes; I've been trying to knit, but I don't think I shall ever be able to do it, Jacky."

"O yes, you will; hope on." And then they both went into the other room to tell the tale of Jack's adventures to their kind friends.

The next morning, at the appointed hour, Jack and Maggie stood at Dr. Harcourt's door. They were shown into his room, and he spoke very kindly to both of them.

"Well, Jack, I have seen Mr. B., and he says he is willing to take you to sweep the yard, and run errands, and make yourself generally useful. Shall you like that?"

"O, thank you, sir; indeed I shall. Please, sir, how much shall I get?"

"Sixty cents a week; and by and by, if he finds you honest and industrious, he will give you something better to do."

Jack could only repeat his thanks, and Dr. Harcourt then turned to Maggie. He led her over to the window and examined her eyes for some time; then he said,

"And do you want work also, my little girl?"

"Yes, sir, please. O, so much!"

"Well, I know of a place where you would be taught to make baskets, and mats, and all those kind of things. Would you like to go there?"

"Must I leave Jacky, sir?"

"Well, my dear, I think if you could make up your mind to leave him for a few weeks you would be better able to help him afterward.

You would be in a very comfortable home, with several other girls, and there is a kind woman who looks after you all, and I should see you often. I think you would be very happy, little Maggie."

Maggie thought for a few moments, and then asked earnestly, "Are you quite sure, sir, that I should be taught to do something useful?"

"Yes, unless you were very stupid, and I don't think you are that."

"Then, please sir, I will go." It was said in rather a hesitating voice, but Maggie knew that she had decided rightly.

"And now, Jack," said Dr. Harcourt, turning again to him, "I want to know if you can read and write?"

"I can read a little, sir, that mother taught me."

"Well, I know of several boys who meet of an evening after their work, and they are taught by a master for an hour or two; they only pay six cents a week for it. Do you think you could manage that?"

"Yes, sir; I think so. I should like to do it very much. Stephen Moore goes to something of that kind."

"Yes; I think Stephen goes to the class I speak of, so you can go with him. I think it would be a very good thing for you, Jack. And now I must not stop any longer. Take this note to Mr. B.'s office; and, Maggie, I will send some one to-morrow to bring you to the place of which I have been telling you," and

with a few more kindly words of advice, Dr. Harcourt dismissed the children.

Jack went to his new employment that day, and though it had its difficulties, he felt very thankful for it, and determined to work on with a brave and manly heart.

The parting between the brother and sister was a very sad one, but Maggie's courage kept up the best, and she tried to comfort Jack by reminding him that it was only for a few weeks, and that at the end of that time she would be able to earn some money. But in spite of all that she could say, Jack went to his work with a saddened heart that day.

And the days glided on into weeks, and the weeks into months, and still Jack did not see his sister.

He began to grow weary of the waiting, and one day, when two months had passed, he summoned up courage to ask Dr. Harcourt when Maggie was coming back.

“Very soon, I hope,” replied the good doctor. “I know you will be glad to see her, Jack. How are you getting on?”

“Pretty well, sir, I think. I have got a rise in my wages, and am beginning to save a little.”

“That’s right. I hope to see you a rich man yet, Jack; and how about the learning?”

“O, sir, that’s much the best part of the day. I like the evenings to come.”

The doctor smiled as he bade Jack “good-by.”

A day or two after Jack came

home in the evening very tired with his day's work, and quite ready for his tea. Mrs. Moore had spread the table, and when Jack had washed his hands and face, and changed his working jacket for another, they all sat down. But they had hardly done so when they heard a gentle tap at the door, and Jack sprang up from the table with a delighted cry of "Maggie, O Maggie!"

Maggie came into the room, and walking straight up to him put her arms round his neck, and kissed him again and again.*

The brother and sister hardly spoke, but at last Jack looked up into her face, and then a still louder cry of pleasure broke from him: "O, Maggie, you can see!"

* See Frontispiece.

"Yes," answered Maggie. "Thanks to kind Dr. Harcourt. O, Jack, how we must love him!"

But Jack could not reply; he only stood gazing into Maggie's face, as if he feared to remove his eyes for an instant, lest his great happiness should prove to be a dream.

"Can you see quite well, Maggie?"

"Yes, Jacky; I can see you, and you've grown such a nice big boy since I saw you last. And I can see dear Mrs. Moore, whom I never saw before," and she turned to kiss her kind friend, who folded her tightly in her arms, and as she did so murmured, "Thank God, who has thus comforted thee, dear child."

"O, I do, I do!" whispered Maggie. "I want to thank him all my life." And then sitting down with

them, she told them of all the kindness she had met with, and how the good doctor had discovered that her blindness had been brought on by the unhealthy atmosphere of the cellar, and from want of food, and that it was curable, and what he had done to her, and of her joy the first day that she could see a little; and then how nice it was when she looked up and saw his kind face, which she declared was just what she had fancied it, only rather nicer. "And now, Jacky, comes one of the best bits of all," she continued; "Mrs. Harcourt wants a little girl to attend on an old lady who lives with her, and she thinks that I can do it, and I am to have regular wages, and I am to spend every Sunday here, that I may go to church with you."

Most hopeful were the two children as they talked long and earnestly that evening about the future before them, and most heartfelt were the thanksgivings which they offered to their Father in heaven for having guided them so far through "the waves of this troublesome world," which had seemed, a short time before, as if they must overwhelm them.

Yes; God had watched over them, and guarded them through the stormy past, and they could leave the future in his hands and still "*hope on!*"

VIII.

The House that Jack Built.

FORTY years have passed away, and we must ask you to imagine yourselves inside the lofty dining-hall belonging to the new Orphan Asylum at ——. About two hundred children are seated at long tables which are spread down the middle of the room, and plentifully covered with bread and butter, and large dishes of plum-cake, accompanied by smoking cups of tea.

The children's faces beam with the highest satisfaction as they partake of these good things, but the chief fun commences when tea is over.

"Hurrah!" The sound swells loudly through the lofty room, and as it

dies away, it is taken up and repeated more lustily.

“Hurrah !” until the walls and ceiling echo back the word and ring again with the noise.

“Hurrah !” until the throats of those who cheer are aching with the exertion, and the ears of those who listen are almost deafened.

And what is the cause of all this noise ? and who is it that is thus enthusiastically welcomed ?

A middle-aged gentleman walks along by the tables, smiling upon the children as he passes, and at last takes his stand upon a step at the far end of the room. His face works strangely as he gazes down the long lines of little faces, which are turned toward him with beaming looks of gratitude and love ; and then for one

moment he turns his eyes in the direction of a lady who is sitting near him, in whose hair streaks of gray are beginning to show themselves. No one could doubt for a moment that they are brother and sister, and she answers his look with a happy smile, for she knows well what he is thinking of.

And now the cheering had ceased, and the gentleman has begun to address the children. His voice trembles a little at first, but it soon grows firmer as he tells them something about his own early days, how he was once left an orphan and a beggar, and of all the changes he passed through before rising to a position of wealth. How, when he had been an errand-boy, he acquired the knowledge of reading and writing, and

keeping accounts, and had been subsequently made a clerk in the merchant's house. How by steady application to his business he had risen in his profession, and had been able to save some money. How he had been taken into partnership by his employer's son on his father's death; and how he had finally become a wealthy merchant, which enabled him to fulfill the greatest wish of his life, namely, to build a house in which those who were left destitute as he had been might be warmed, and fed, and clothed, and put in the way of earning an honest livelihood, and thus be saved from the fearful temptations to which he himself had been exposed, and he concludes his story in these words:

“On the wall opposite to me, dear

children, I see a banner bearing my favorite motto, 'Hope on, hope ever.' Shall I tell you the kind of boy who has a right to use these words? Certainly it is not the lazy boy or the dishonest boy, or the one who is going on in what he knows to be wrong. No; the boy who can '*hope on*' must be the boy who will *work on*; who will bravely and manfully struggle against the difficulties and temptations in his way; who will not mind a little ridicule, or a little harshness, when he knows he is doing right; who can call God his Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and trust himself entirely to his care, praying him to keep him 'his faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end.' This is the kind of boy who can '*hope on*' through this life, and '*hope on*' for

the life to come, and for the crown of glory which his Saviour has laid up for him above when his fighting days are done."

The speaker has paused; and as we scan the features of his benevolent countenance, surely we can recognize an old friend.

Yes, it is, it must be, the little beggar boy with whom our story commenced; that is his sister Maggie beside him; and "*this* is the house that Jack built!"

THE BEGGARS.

A FOG, denser than even December often brings, had settled over the busy town of ——. The lamps, lit at mid-day, seemed to add to the gloom rather than to disperse it.

There were few comers and goers upon the streets, and the few were either men of business, or the children of want and wretchedness, to whose trade such a day was a very harvest. In one of the larger squares of the city some shrill voices were singing a well-known ballad. It was Ellen Bird and her two little ones, come forth to try how much pity was left in the world. Their thin figures,

dressed in trailing brown rags, seemed almost a part of the uncomfortable mist; and many a kind-hearted mother, forgetting all she had often said about the sin of giving to beggars, sent out some food or cents to the forlorn singers.

Their task was nearly over when a child passed them, poorly clad, and carrying a basket. Just as she passed there was a chink on the pavement, and Ellen Bird picked up a dime.

"She has lost it, mother!" cried little Annie; "let me give it back; she's just like ourselves."

The woman looked at the dime. The temptation was strong, but the child's entreaties prevailed. "There, take it," she said; "we wont rob the poor."

In a moment Annie had found its

owner. "Here's your money, little girl," she said; "we don't keep it, for you are poor. Where do you live? Are you a beggar like us?"

The girl looked quite angry as she answered, "No, indeed, none of us are beggars; and mother said we were never to speak to beggars."

So saying she darted off, leaving little Annie sobbing at the ingratitude of her new acquaintance.

Ellen Bird was by descent a beggar, and had married a vagrant. While her husband lived, they were seldom long in one place; but, for some reason or other, after his death she had settled in ——, where begging, as in all manufacturing towns, was a profitable trade. Busy men, who had no time to seek out the deserving poor, found it a relief to their con-

sciences to scatter some money as they hurried along; and perhaps more than their share fell to the lot of the widow and her children.

Low and degraded as the poor woman was, she did love these two children, and it was this only that preserved her from becoming a confirmed drunkard, and made her prefer living alone with them in the crazy old garret which they occupied, to living with others of her class in some beggars' lodging-house.

No sooner did they reach home that foggy night than a fire was lighted on the hearth, and a fagot thrown on, which crackled and sparkled famously, to the great delight of little Molly, a child of six years old. A pot was next swung over the flames, and from her stores Ellen dropped in

sometimes meat, sometimes potatoes, till quite a savory mess was prepared. Meanwhile Annie, the elder girl, sat near, gloomily stitching together some of the most detached fragments of her frock. At last she broke silence.

“Mother,” she said in a determined voice, “I won’t be a beggar any more!”

Mrs. Bird ceased to stir the pot in pure amazement. “And what will you be, little lady?” she asked, almost furiously. “Maybe a queen?”

“I don’t know,” sobbed Annie, “but I won’t beg any more, to be laughed at by wicked little girls. I want to work.”

“You’d soon tire of that,” said her mother with a scornful laugh. “Here, child, eat this and go to sleep. There’s little rest and plenty of hunger for them that works.”

The child took her supper, and said no more ; but the sullen, determined look did not leave her face, and when Ellen Bird awoke next morning there was no one near her but little Molly.

It was at early dawn that Annie had risen, and stolen softly down the stairs into the still, silent street, resolved to be a beggar no longer. She walked quickly along until she was at a considerable distance from home, and then paused to consider what she should next do. Looking round, she saw a woman busy sweeping down the steps in front of her store. Strange to say, she had never felt afraid to beg, yet now she trembled all over as she went toward the woman and said, " Please, ma'am, do you need a little girl like me to carry your vegetables ?"

The woman looked at her kindly, but said, "No, my dear; and if I did, it wouldn't be a little arm like yours that could carry my baskets." Then, hastily entering her store, she returned with a roll, which she held to the child, asking if she were hungry. Annie took the roll and turned sadly away.

Many such answers she got, and some harsher ones, too; till at last she sat down on a door-step to cry, and to eat her roll, for she was hungry as well as weary. While she sat there she saw an old gentleman coming down the street, and she thought, "That old gentleman looks so good that I think he would help a little child to get work." So as he came near she rose, and dropping a courtesy began,

“Please, sir —”

“Get along, get along; I don’t like little beggars!” he said in a quick, loud voice.

Poor little Annie burst into tears as she saw her last hope failing her; but she sobbed out, “I don’t want to beg, sir.”

“What do you want, then?” he asked in the same rough voice.

“Please, sir, I want to get work,” she answered.

“A likely story, indeed!” said the old gentleman. “Stealing is the only work you are fit for, I fear. But come,” he added, looking kindly at her, “you may come along with me, and I’ll give you a chance.”

Annie followed her new friend to a handsome house near where they had met; and when a servant opened

the door he was told to take her into the kitchen and give her some breakfast. After some time she was again sent for, and taken into a large room, where the old gentleman was sitting along with an old lady, who looked as kind as himself. They asked her many questions about her mother, and their former life, and what now had made her wish to work. Annie told all the truth, pretty much because she was frightened, and had not time to think of any story that would sound better. At last the lady said, "My dear, we think you are too young to work yet; but if you will try and be a good child, we will send you to a school, where you will learn to read, and be taught, I hope, to love and fear God; and when you are older, we will put you into

some way of gaining an honest livelihood."

This was, indeed, far better than Annie had ever dreamed of; for if she had one desire stronger than another, it was that she might go to school. Her evident joy pleased her kind friends; but when she found that she was to live in the school a cloud came over her face, and she said, "Then I can't go, ma'am; I can't leave my mother and Molly."

It was in vain that they told her of the good food and clothes she was to have, and that they promised to be kind to her mother. The little girl had a strong will of her own, and no promises could change her resolution. "I could not leave mother at night," she stoutly maintained. "Mother would just take to drinking

if she had not Molly and me. O, let me go to school in the day-time, ma'am, and let me go home to mother at night !”

Little Annie got her own way of it, and in less than an hour's time she was seated at the foot of a long form in the Industrial School. What a wonderful day this first one at school seemed to the poor beggar girl ! There were many happy little faces there, but the earnestness of the new scholar sometimes caused a laugh among those who had been longer there. The Bible-class that morning was taught by a stranger. He had been speaking to them very earnestly of heaven as that happy home where God wished to welcome them all at last, and of Jesus as the mighty Saviour, who could wash all their sins

away and lead them safely there, when, seeing the look of painful eagerness with which little Annie listened, he suddenly turned to her, and said, "My child, what do you know about God?" Annie thought a moment; "I do not know about God," she said; "mother speaks of him when she is angry." Some of the rude children near her laughed, but a stern "Hush!" from the teacher silenced them all. "Poor, poor child!" he said; "and yet you have lived ten years in what we call a Christian land!" Then turning to the others, he said, "We must teach her a text from the Bible about God. Can any of you tell me one of only three words?" After a while a boy said, "God is love."

"Right; that is the very one I

wished. Now, find the board which has that text upon it. And can any of you tell me another of four words which we can teach this little girl?"

No one answered, so he added, "Thou, God, seest me;" and when that text was also found, he bade one of the elder children take Annie to a seat apart from the rest and teach her them both. Annie was an apt pupil, and learned many things this first day, but nothing seemed to her so wonderful as this Bible lesson. To hear that she had a Father in heaven was good news to the little wanderer, and as she repeated the verses over and over, she felt ready to exclaim, "O! why did no one tell me this before?" As she passed through the crowded thoroughfares on her way home, she

looked with a new interest on every one she passed, wondering whether they knew the mighty truth which she had learned that day.

She passed two rude boys, who were amusing themselves teasing a poor idiot girl. "Ah," she thought, they have never heard it!" and she paused a moment to think if she would tell them; but she was afraid, and passed on. Soon she heard angry words near her, and she saw two girls fighting. She knew one of them in a moment. It was the girl she had restored the lost dime to; but she was afraid to speak to her, so she passed on again. Then, turning into a quieter street, she was surprised to see the very woman who had given her the roll in the morning beating a poor dog most unmer-

cifully, which had thrown down one of her baskets of potatoes. "What a pity," thought Annie, "that such a nice woman has not been taught about God! I will tell her." And, going gladly forward, "O, ma'am," she said, "have you never heard it?"

"Heard what?" asked the woman.

"I mean," said Annie, "what I learned to-day: 'God is love;' and 'Thou, God, seest me.'"

"The dear child!" exclaimed the woman. "They are old words. I thought you had got some news to tell us."

"Thank you, my pretty maiden," said an old man, who Annie thought must be the woman's father. "If ye make as good a use of all ye learn at school, ye'll do."

Annie went on, not a little abashed;

she saw they had known it all before, and that it was possible to know and not believe. When she returned home, further mortification awaited her. Her mother was at heart very glad to see the child return, but she took no notice of her; and though Molly was eager enough to ask where she had been, she would not listen long, and soon was dancing round the room, imitating the antics of a monkey they had gone along with part of the day.

Each morning found Annie at her post in the school, and the rapid progress she made surprised the teachers, and delighted Mr. More, the kind old gentleman who had brought her there. He even found out their miserable garret, that he might try and get little Molly to

school too; but Mrs. Bird angrily answered, that she would not have Molly taught to despise her mother.

"I am sorry if Annie has learned that at school," said Mr. More.

"No, no," she replied; "it would be hard to set Annie against her mother. She's a good child. But there's not two like Annie in the world, and I'll not let Molly have the chance."

So Mr. More said no more, and Molly was left to her vagrant life.

Some months had passed since the beginning of my story, when one evening Molly and her mother were later than usual of returning from their wanderings. Annie had come home, and kindled the fire, and done all she could to make the little place look comfortable. At last they came,

and there was a color in her mother's cheeks, and a glitter in her eye, that made Annie afraid she had been in the gin-shop; only Molly was with her, and she never took Molly there. She tossed a torn jacket to Annie, and said, "There, child, put that together, if you're not too proud to work for your mother!" Annie found a needle and thread, and meekly took up the soiled and tattered garment. There was a long silence, for even Molly was afraid to speak. A cat, which sometimes shared their garret, crept near the fire; but Mrs. Bird drove it away with a fearful oath. Annie sprang from her seat: "O, mother!" she cried, forgetting all her fear, "do not speak that way! It is God's name!"

“And what do I care for that?” she replied, fiercely. “What is God to me?”

“God is our Father in heaven,” said Annie. “God is love. God gives us everything.”

There was a solemn earnestness in the child's voice that awed her mother for a moment; but then, as if ashamed of such weakness, she broke forth more wildly than before. “And what kind of a Father has he been to me? Let them praise him that have something to praise him for! What has God given to me? What has he given to Ellen Bird but a life of sorrow and shame, and want and wretchedness?” Her voice sunk into a sort of low wail, and she covered her face with her hands. Annie crept very close to her. She whispered softly,

“Mother, dear mother, God has given you Molly and me !”

She had touched the right chord, the only soft point in that long hardened heart. Ellen flung her arms wildly round the child, and wept as she had never wept before ; and Annie knew that she was felt to be a good gift from her Father in heaven.

Ellen Bird had little thought, when she went out that morning, that it was the very last time she should wander through these streets, the last day of her beggar-life ; but so it was. The flushed face and voice that had so startled Annie was the beginning of a violent rheumatic fever. For weeks she lay all but insensible in a hospital, and when the fever was over she was carried, a poor helpless cripple, to one of the almshouses of the

city. No one could say what passed in the mind of the poor sufferer, for she spoke little, only she bore the irksome monotony of her almshouse life with wonderful patience. Annie and Molly were both boarded in the school by their kind friends, and their weekly visit was the one enjoyment of her life.

When Annie was fifteen, her ability seemed so great that she was sent for three years to a Normal School ; and when her training there was completed, she was appointed mistress to a flourishing school at D., some miles from —.

The joy and gratitude of her heart were now complete, for she could bring her mother to her home ; and such a home, too ! No dark, crazy garret, such as they had once lived in

together, but a sweet little cottage, fragrant with roses and honeysuckle. It was a happy day when she and Molly helped to lift the poor invalid into a comfortable chair, provided for her by Mrs. More. "Blessings on you, my two good children!" she said as they laid her carefully down. "I never looked for this. But, Annie, I have learned it all now. God has taught me that he is love."

THE
CUP OF COLD WATER.

MRS. BURTON sat sewing one evening ; it was quite late, but still she sat, as mothers often will, making and mending little garments, long after the restless limbs which wear and tear them are relaxed in sweet repose.

Knowing that all the household but herself had gone to rest, she was a little startled to hear at that late hour a slight noise in the kitchen, as of some one fumbling around in the dark. Taking a light, she went out, and was surprised to find there her little boy, about six years old.

“Why, Arty, my son!” she exclaimed, “what are you doing down here in the dark?”

“I want some water for Johnnie, mother; he wants a drink,” said Arty. Johnnie was his little brother, who slept with Arty in a room next their mother’s.

“Well, my dear, you should not have come down in the cold, all undressed; why did you not call and ask for it?” said the mother; but she did not wait for an answer, for Arty was shivering, and his teeth chattering with the cold. Hastily filling Johnnie’s cup with water, she threw a shawl around Arty and took him up stairs. Poor little Johnnie did indeed want a drink. His mother found him sitting up in bed, evidently quite feverish. He stretched out

his hands eagerly for his cup, and so did Arty too.

"Please let *me* give it to him, mother," he said; and she allowed him to do so, wondering at his earnestness. Having held the cup for his brother to drink, he clambered into the bed beside him, and Johnnie threw his arm around his neck, which made Arty look up at his mother with a happy smile.

Mrs. Burton prepared some cooling medicine for Johnnie, and came often to look at him through the night. He was very restless for a while, but toward morning he seemed better, and slept quietly.

Johnnie did not go to school, as usual, with his brothers and sister the next day. He amused himself quietly with his blocks for some time,

when the rest were gone; and at last, when tired of play, he curled himself up upon the sofa and fell asleep. As his mother sat beside him, she recalled to mind Arty's earnestness about the drink of water, and resolved to ask him what it meant. She had not long to wait ere she heard the sound of merry voices approaching, and Arthur and his sister Mattie burst into the room in great glee, having been racing to see which should get in first.

Their brother Frank followed, complaining in no very gentle tones because they had left the gate and doors for him to shut.

"Arty," said his mother presently, when they had become quiet, and were gathered around the fire, "why did you so especially wish to get the

water for Johnnie *yourself*, last night?"

"Because, mother," said he, "I thought of such a sweet text that I heard last Sunday."

"What was it, dear? Can you remember the words?"

Arty thought a moment, and said, "It was about giving 'a cup of cold water to the little ones.' I don't remember it all, but I thought Jesus would be pleased."

Here Frank looked up from his book and laughed. "O, Arty," he said, "did you think it meant a real cup of water?"

Arty blushed at this; but his mother, looking at Frank, asked, "What *does* it mean, my son?"

It was now Frank's turn to blush; but, as his mother waited for him

to answer, he at length said, "I supposed it meant being kind in *any* way."

"You are right," said Mrs. Burton ; "it does ; but do you not think, Frank, it would be well for us *all* to remember and *act* upon our Saviour's words, so far as we understand them. *This* was what Arty was trying to do, I think. But now, my little boy, I will read you again the verse which you tried to remember ; here it is : 'Who-soever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward.' " Matt. x, 42.

"It *is* a sweet verse, isn't it, mother?" said Mattie, who had come also to hear.

"Yes, dear, it is a *precious* verse !

But, Arty, we need not wait until some one actually needs 'a cup of cold water' in order to gain the promised blessing. Jesus said, 'Who-soever shall give a cup of cold water *only*;' he meant to teach us that he would see and remember *every* act of kindness done for his sake, that is, for the love of him, even so small a thing as giving a drink to one in need. Every day and hour, my dear children, brings us an opportunity of speaking a kind word, or doing some loving deed, for Christ's sake; and *this* is the 'cup of cold water' which our dear Lord says shall in no wise lose its reward."

"Mother," said Mattie softly, "if we keep from teasing each other for Jesus's sake, is that what the verse means too?"

“Yes, Mattie,” said her mother, smiling a little; “for it would show the working of the spirit of love, which the words are meant to teach. I read lately an anecdote of King Herod Agrippa, which reminded me of these words of Christ; would you like to hear it, children?”

The children assented of course, being always ready for a story.

“Was that the King Herod who killed the infants at Bethlehem, mother?” asked Mattie.

“No, dear; Herod Agrippa was a grandson of that Herod. He was the one that killed the Apostle James, and put Peter in prison. Before he was made king, he spent some time in Rome; and while there a careless speech which he made one day, while excited with wine, was reported to

the emperor Tiberius. It made the emperor angry, and he commanded that Agrippa should be seized and bound. It was on some public occasion that Tiberius gave this command, and Agrippa was bound even as he was, in his purple garments. The weather was very hot, and as he was led about in chains, awaiting the emperor's orders, he suffered greatly from thirst. Seeing a young slave passing with a vessel of water, he implored him to let him drink. The slave willingly did so, although he, no doubt, ran a great risk in befriending one who was under the displeasure of Tiberius. Having drunk freely, Agrippa exclaimed, 'O thou boy, if I once get clear of these bonds I will procure *thee* thy freedom!' And he remembered his promise. Not long

after Tiberius died, and Caius, the friend of Agrippa, became emperor. One of the first acts of his reign was to liberate Agrippa, exchange his iron chain for a gold one of equal weight, and send him loaded with honors to his newly appointed kingdom in Judea. And now Agrippa obtained the freedom of the slave Thaumastus who had ministered to him so kindly, and made him the steward of his own estates. And when dying, he commended him to his son and daughter; so that the man held that honorable post in the family of Herod until his death.

“Dear children, if this king, who was by no means remarkable for virtue, so remembered and rewarded ‘a cup of cold water,’ what may we not expect from our Lord’s prom-

ise to those who thus minister unto him?"

"Minister unto *him*, mother!" said Mattie, "how *can* we?"

"How *can* we, Frank? do you know?" said his mother, for Frank's book was closed now, and he, too, was listening to her narrative with great interest.

Frank *did* know, and repeated, "The king shall say, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto me." And coming to his mother, he kissed her forehead, whispering, "I will try to remember, dear mother, to give the cup of cold water."

And so do *you*, my dear little readers, and you will find that every loving, kindly action, which you do for Jesus's sake, will bring you, even in the present time, the promised re-

ward, for it will fill your own heart
with sweet peace.

“Little deeds of kindness,
Little words of love,
Make our earth an Eden,
Like the heaven above.”

THE END.

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